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24 September 1966

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN

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CONTENTS

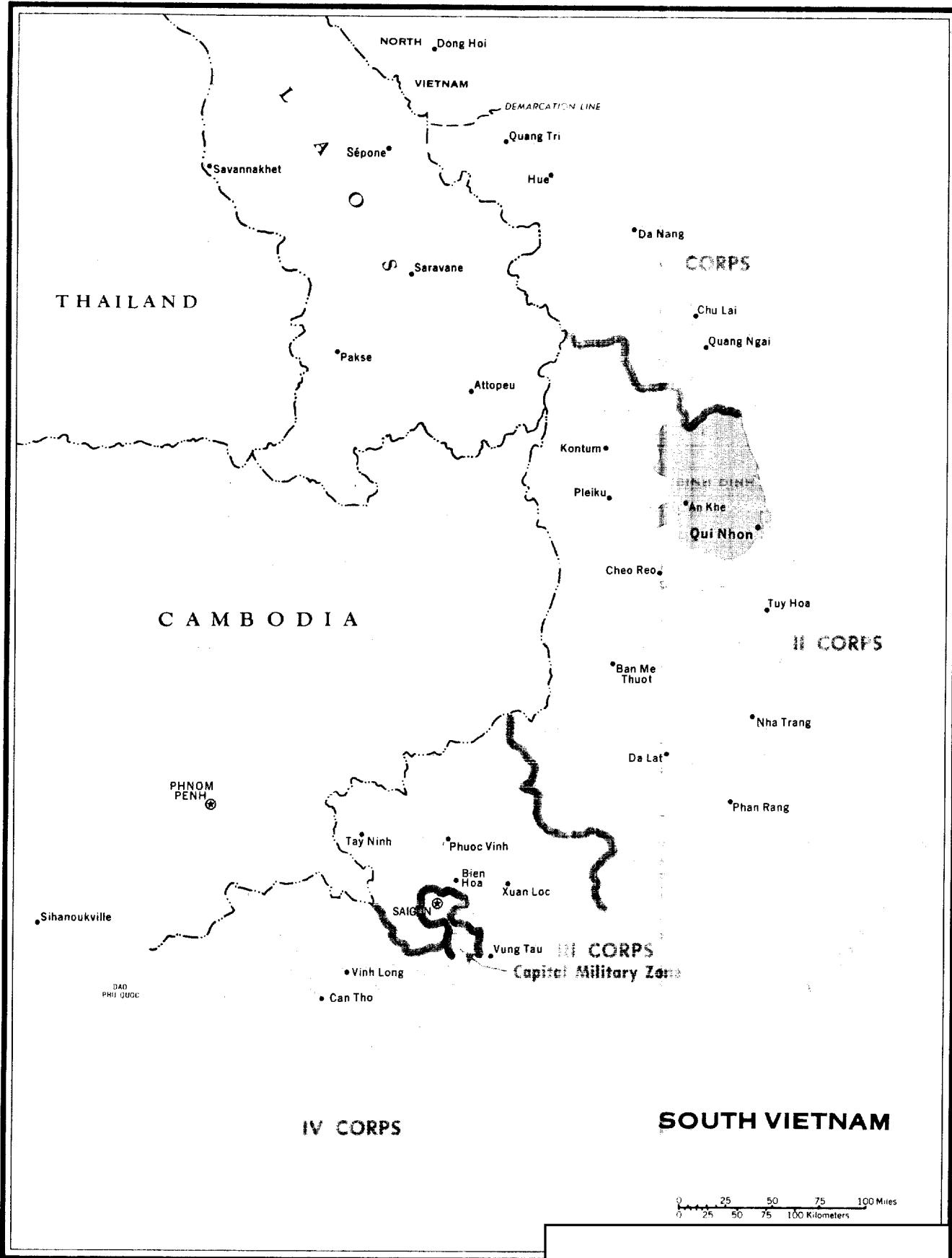
1. Vietnam: Current situation report. (Page 1)
2. Congo (Kinshasa): Katangans battle Congolese Army in Kisangani (Stanleyville). (Page 4)

25X1

4. Brazil: Student demonstrations continue to harass government. (Page 6)
5. Notes: Warsaw Pact; Malaysia; [redacted] Nigeria. (Page 7)

25X1

25X1



25X1

25X1
24 Sep 66 CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN Map

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN

24 September 1966

***Vietnam: (Information as of 4:30 AM EDT)**

Political Situation in South Vietnam: The military leadership is taking a cautious position on the new constituent assembly.

At a meeting on 22 September, military members of the ruling Directorate agreed that they should not "dictate" to the assembly or openly interfere with its work. There was no discussion of the possibility of using Article 20 of the decree establishing the assembly, which authorizes the Directorate to revise any constitution drafted by the assembly. There have been reports that some civilian assembly members intend to have Article 20 abrogated when the assembly convenes on 27 September.

Military Situation in South Vietnam: Communist forces mounted two significant attacks yesterday.

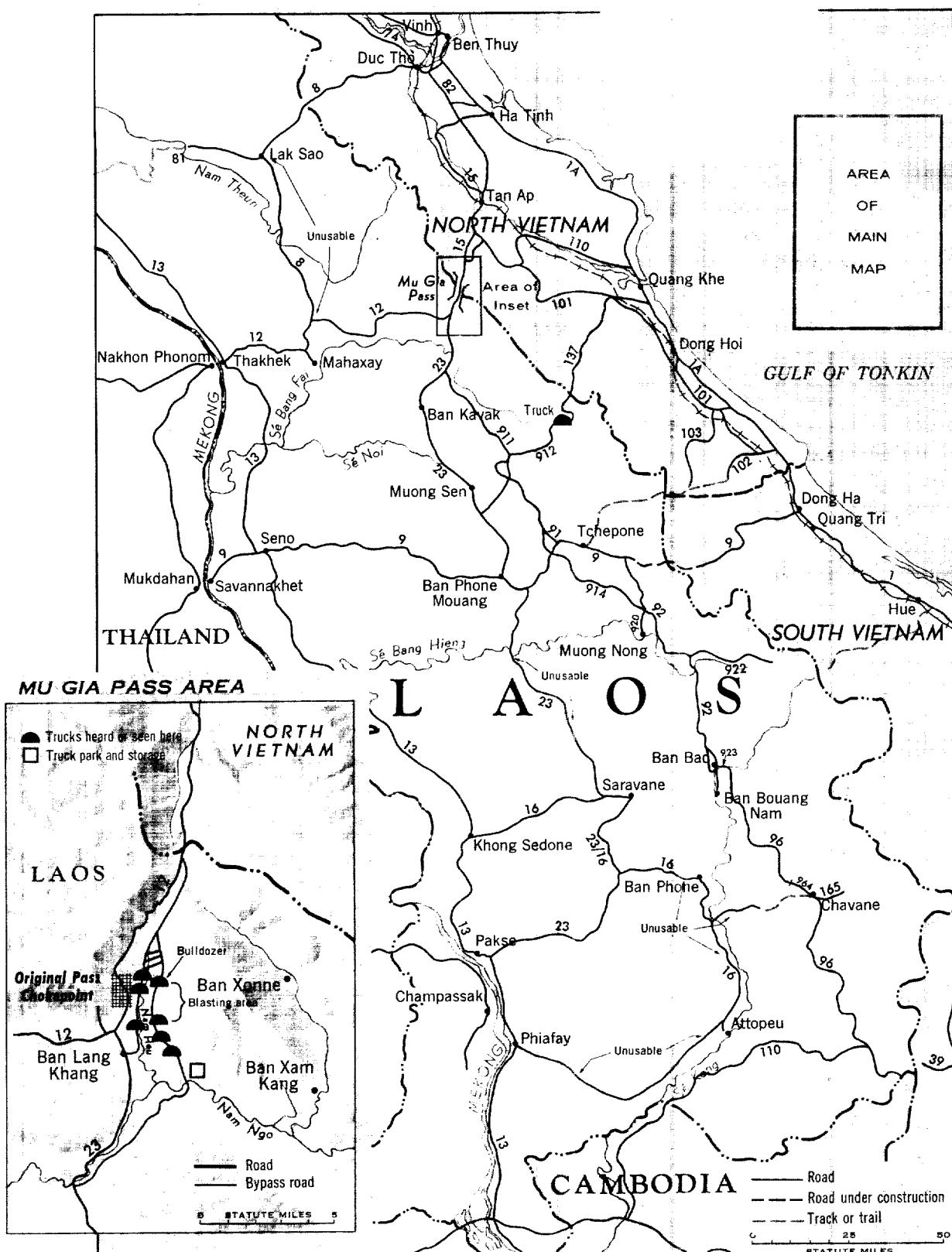
A battalion-strength Viet Cong force suffered heavy losses while attacking South Vietnamese positions some 30 miles northwest of Qui Nhon in coastal Binh Dinh Province. US troops have been deployed in an attempt to block enemy escape routes. Communist losses were 137 killed, and friendly casualties were six killed and 30 wounded.

The enemy also shelled a US airfield in the same general area with mortars, killing one US soldier, wounding 25 others and damaging 15 helicopters. (Map)

Hanoi Rejects ICC Request on DMZ: North Vietnam on 23 September turned aside an ICC request that Hanoi allow the ICC to reinstitute the patrol activities of ICC Mobile Team 76 in the northeastern sector of the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ).

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24 Sep 66 CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN Map

In an official letter to the ICC, the North Vietnamese Liaison Mission stated that the appeal to both North and South Vietnam asking respect for the DMZ and cooperation with Team 76 "does not correspond with objective reality in the Zone; therefore it is not conducive to appropriate settlement of the present situation in the Zone."

The North Vietnamese statement asserted that the "facts" show that only one side--"that of the United States and the Saigon puppet administration"--has "sabotaged" the status of the DMZ and hindered all normal activities of the ICC.

Indian members of the ICC reported that on 14 September North Vietnamese liaison officer Lieut. Col. Anh Vu had replied verbally to the ICC request for Hanoi to allow the reactivation of Team 76 by stating that Hanoi is ready to offer its cooperation but that the US and GVN must: (1) stop the introduction of troops into the DMZ; (2) stop "activities" and bombing in the DMZ, and (3) stop "their obstacles" in the Ben Hai river, on the land and in the air.

The North Vietnam position as stated both by Lieut. Col. Vu and the 23 September letter to the ICC is consistent with the past North Vietnamese position that Hanoi's hands are clean and that the ICC should condemn the US and the GVN. Hanoi has consistently rejected any efforts at de-escalation of the war which even obliquely imply that North Vietnam has been guilty of any transgressions of the 1954 Geneva agreements.

Mu Gia Pass: Truck movements between North Vietnam and Laos have shown a marked increase in recent weeks according to reports received from road watch teams stationed near the Mu Gia pass.

Between 7 and 20 September, 80 individual trucks and two convoys of unknown size have been observed heading south. During the same period 15 trucks have been noted on their way to North Vietnam. The rate of individual truck traffic alone is double that of the preceding four months.

(continued)

24 Sep 66

2

The increased traffic has begun approximately one month before the rainy season is expected to end. Watch teams have reported considerable efforts during the summer monsoon season to maintain and improve Route 12 on the Laotian side of the Mu Gia pass. There are indications that traffic may also have increased on Route 912, the only other truck infiltration route from North Vietnam, but the extent of the buildup cannot be determined.

25X1

24 Sep 66

3

25X1

*Congo (Kinshasa): Heavy fighting broke out yesterday in Kisangani (Stanleyville) between mutinous Katangans and Congolese Army (ANC) forces attempting to disarm them.

The Katangans have the superior force and should be able to hold their position in the city against the ANC units which are moving to encircle them. The commander of one Katangan unit which came south from the Uganda border region in August has withheld his 600 men from the battle and offered to support President Mobutu in return for a safe conduct home. The remaining 2,100 Katangans distrust Mobutu's recent offer to send them home unarmed without fear of reprisal and apparently intend to make their stand in Kisangani.

The French-speaking mercenaries in Kisangani have not yet entered the battle, but their commander is coordinating the operations of the ANC units in the area and plans to come to the aid of Mobutu's forces as soon as he is reinforced by a mercenary unit which was para-dropped some 60 miles away on Wednesday.

Shortages of food and ammunition, poor logistical support, and the arrival of the rainy season are likely to limit both the scope and duration of the present fighting. Mobutu's move against the Katangans, however, could lead to similar outbreaks in Sud-Katanga Province and among other Katangan units in the northeast.

25X1

24 Sep 66

4

25X1

25X1

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Brazil: Student demonstrations continue to present a serious problem for the Castello Branco regime.

Serious violence developed in Rio de Janeiro on 22 September when police used force to eject 400 to 500 students barricaded in the university. One policeman was shot to death in a gun battle between police and high school students in Goiania. Demonstrations were held in several other cities, including Brasilia and Salvador, as part of a national day of protest against the government.

Conditions in the university area of Sao Paulo are very tense. Students there were reported planning to conduct "lightning rallies" throughout the city. Security forces plan to remain on alert for at least a week.

25X1

24 Sep 66

6

25X1

NOTES

Warsaw Pact: The "Vltava" maneuver, which ended on 22 September, closely resembled last year's "October Storm" exercise in size but fell short of advanced Czech publicity. There are indications that it was intended as much for its political impact as for a test of military capability. The official end of "Vltava" will be celebrated by a "victory parade" on Sunday in Ceske Budejovice, where "weapons never seen by the West" may be displayed.

25X1

Malaysia: The state assembly of the East Malaysia state of Sarawak passed a no-confidence vote yesterday against Chief Minister Stephen Ningkan. Under amendments to the Sarawak constitution engineered by the central government in Kuala Lumpur on 19 September, this vote obliged the governor of Sarawak to dismiss Ningkan--which he did today. The ouster, climaxing a three-month dispute between Kuala Lumpur and the autonomy-minded chief minister, will increase dissatisfaction with the central government. Ningkan has predicted he will regain the post in the next elections, probably next year.

25X1

25X1

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24 Sep 66

7

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Nigeria: Eastern Military Governor Ojukwu has attempted to shift the onus for any breakup of the country back to the North. On 22 September he again denied the East's intention to secede, indicating a willingness to negotiate some of the East's positions with the other delegations at the constitutional conference in Lagos. He continues to insist, however, on a looser association than that now backed by the army command and the other regions. He also excludes for now the possibility of rehabilitating the army as a cohesive national force--Supreme Commander Gowon's primary objective.

25X1

24 Sep 66

8

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